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Sixth column real threat to U.S.

IN 1936, when Spanish Nationalist Gen. Mola was besieging Madrid with four military columns, he boasted of a civilian "fifth column" acting within. Fifth column has since come to mean any group that aids the enemy from inside its own country.

In 1981, as Libyan strongman Khadafy wages his brand of terrorist war, he can boast having a "sixth column" — former CIA agents aiding the Libyan regime from *outside* the U.S. And, last summer, Khadafy and the Kremlin could also boast of a wing of 20 U.S. pilots — including an ex-Navy officer — flying supplies in their invasion of Chad.

There is a law against "fifth column" activities, such as selling classified documents to the Soviets, and that is treason. But apparently the U.S. has no effective way of protecting itself against "sixth column" activities when its citizens act outside the country's borders.

Federal investigators have uncovered some of the sixth column activities of two ex-CIA agents, Edwin P. Wilson and Francis E. Terpil. Both have been reported to be living as wealthy fugitives somewhere in the Middle East, since skipping out on a federal indictment, in 1980, for illegally exporting terrorist equipment to Libya. A federal grand jury has accused Wilson and Terpil of providing high explosives and sensitive night vision devices, and having trained commandos for Khadafy's regime. Wilson reportedly tried to get a Sunnyvale, California, firm to sell secret computer programs to the Soviets, and is also implicated in an assassination attempt against a Libyan dissident in Colorado.

The Miami Herald has uncovered a separate sixth column activity, also with Libya, that involves South Florida pilots who flew dozens of transport flights for Khadafy last summer, ferrying equip-

ment to military bases during his invasion of Chad. The State Department apparently knew of the Americans' involvement, but could not halt it because they did not transport weapons or related military supplies. Charles Girtman, a former Navy lieutenant, said that U.S. officials tried to dissuade him, but there was no law against it.

Why have former CIA agents and ex-military officers been permitted to aid a regime in terrorist activities against U.S. interests and foreign policy?

The secrecy necessary for legitimate CIA activities has been used as a cloak to disguise illicit arms sales. Complex air company registries masked the pseudo-mercenary activities of pilots.

Wilson and Terpil are beyond the reach of extradition. The CIA has either not tried, or has failed, to use its undercover means to protect the agency and the U.S. from sixth column activities of former operatives. And the mercenary pilots have returned from Chad to Florida and not been charged with any crime.

America is now spending millions of dollars to protect the Sudan and Egypt from the pro-Khadafy regime, which American fliers helped install in Chad. Our security network is threatened by individuals who defected and took U.S. expertise to international terrorists, terrorists that Secretary of State Alexander Haig called the No. 1 enemy of America.

We must defend ourselves from ex-CIA agents and mercenaries acting outside the U.S., just as we protect our country from spies acting within. Sixth column activities are as dangerous to democracy in America as Gen. Mola's fifth column was to the young Republic that fought for its life, and lost, in Spain.